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160929Z Feb 01

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DINT-00	DODE-00
	DOT-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	BBG-00	R-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/007W

-----C68A50 160929Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8236
INFO NSC WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000760

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1.6X5

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [ZI](#) [MDC](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)

SUBJECT: BRITISH REPORT ON ZANU-PF OVERTURES TO THE MDC
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REF: HARARE 754

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR REASONS 1.5 B/D.

1. (C) ON FEBRUARY 16 THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HERE SHARED WITH US THE TEXT OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE SENT TO LONDON FEBRUARY 15 REPORTING ON MORGAN TSVANGIRAI'S OBSERVATIONS WITH RESPECT TO ZANU-PF OVERTURES TO HIS PARTY.

2. (C) BEGIN TEXT:

SUBJECT: ZANU-PF OVERTURES TO TSVANGIRAI

SUMMARY

1. TSVANGIRAI OPENING DIALOGUE WITH GOVERNMENT; BUT NOT TALKING ABOUT GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. EARLY DAYS; NOT YET DISCUSSED WITH MDC EXECUTIVE. SAYS HE IS AWARE OF THE DANGERS BUT HAS TO RESPOND TO OVERTURES FROM GOZ IN THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION.

DETAIL

2. ON 15 FEBRUARY SECOND SECRETARY LINDSAY CALLED ON MDC PRESIDENT TSVANGIRAI TO DISCUSS INFORMATION WE HAD RECEIVED ABOUT OVERTURES MADE BY ZANU-PF TO THE MDC. TSVANGIRAI SAID THAT THE COUNTRY WAS IN A DEEP CRISIS; ZANU-PF COULD NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT REPRESSION AND THE MDC COULD NOT WIN BY CONFRONTING THAT REPRESSION. IT WAS IN THE NATIONAL

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INTEREST THAT THEY EMBARK UPON DIALOGUE; BUT THE ONUS WAS ON ZANU-PF. HE ADDED THAT ZANU-PF WAS ON ITS KNEES ECONOMICALLY, ALTHOUGH IT WAS STILL STRONG POLITICALLY.

3. TSVANGIRAI REITERATED HIS CONVICTION THAT HE WOULD WIN A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2002, BUT NOTED THAT WINNING THE ELECTION WOULD BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WINNING POWER. WE SHOULD NOT DISMISS MUGABE'S RHETORIC WHEN HE SAYS THAT HE WOULD NEVER ALLOW TSVANGIRAI TO BECOME PRESIDENT. THE MDC ALREADY HAD GOOD CONTACTS WITHIN THE SECURITY FORCES BUT MUGABE HAS CREATED ALTERNATIVE MILITIAS WHICH COULD VERY QUICKLY CREATE CHAOS. TSVANGIRAI SAID THAT MASS ACTION WOULD ONLY BE LEGITIMATE IF HE WON THE ELECTION AND WAS NOT ALLOWED TO ASSUME POWER. EVEN IF HE WAS ALLOWED TO TAKE POWER TSVANGIRAI WONDERED WHAT WOULD BE LEFT OF THE COUNTRY IN FIFTEEN MONTHS TIME. HE AGREED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP A GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO SENSIBLE PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND REFORM BUT IT WOULD NOT HAPPEN ON THE FIRST DAY AND HE WOULD NEED BREATHING SPACE.

4. FOR THESE REASONS TSVANGIRAI SAID IT WAS SENSIBLE TO HAVE

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT. BUT THESE WERE AT AN EMBRYONIC STAGE; THERE HAD BEEN A SERIES OF OVERTURES FROM ZANU-PF BUT NOTHING CONCRETE. TSVANGIRAI MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE MDC WERE NOT INITIATING ANYTHING, AND THEY WERE NOT NEGOTIATING. THEY HAD ALREADY SPECIFIED THAT IF THEY WERE TO ENTER DISCUSSIONS IT WOULD BE AS AN INDEPENDENT PARTY - EVERYONE KNEW HOW ZAPU HAD BEEN SWALLOWED UP BY ZANU-PF.

15. LINDSAY ASKED HOW WIDELY THIS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITHIN THE MDC. TSVANGIRAI SAID THAT THE ONLY WAY TO PROCEED WAS THROUGH OPEN DEBATE

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IN THE EXECUTIVE, BUT THIS HAD NOT YET BEGUN. NOBODY WOULD BE FORCED DOWN THIS ROUTE AND HE EXPECTED SOME VERY STRONG OPPOSITION FROM
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WITHIN HIS PARTY - BUT HE WELCOMED SOME HEALTHY DEBATE. LINDSAY ASKED WHETHER THEY BELIEVED THE OVERTURES TO BE GENUINE; ALL THE RHETORIC AND ACTIONS FROM ZANU-PF OVER THE LAST SIX WEEKS INDICATED A HARDENING OF THEIR POSITION AND INCREASING POLARISATION OF THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. TSVANGIRAI CONCURRED, BUT SAID THAT THE MDC HAD A NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO EXPLORE ANY OPPORTUNITIES; THERE HAD TO BE NATIONAL CONSENSUS OVER THE ISSUES OF RULE OF LAW, LAND AND THE ECONOMY. THEY WOULD TEST THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE APPROACH BY DEMANDING AN IMMEDIATE RETURN TO THE RULE OF LAW. HE WAS EMPHATIC THAT HE WAS NOT THROWING A LIFELINE TO ZANU-PF.

16. ON 14 FEBRUARY CLIVE PUZEY, A PROMINENT WHITE BUSINESSMAN WHO SUPPORTS THE MDC HAD BRIEFED US ABOUT THESE DEVELOPMENTS, APPARENTLY WITH TSVANGIRAI'S BLESSING. HE WENT INTO MORE DETAIL WITH A STORY ABOUT FINDING AN OFFSHORE LOCATION FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS, USING THE VATICAN AS AN INTERMEDIARY, AND A FAR-FETCHED SCHEME BY THE MDC TO FLATTER MUGABE ON HIS BIRTHDAY (21 FEBRUARY). HE SAID THAT THE ULTIMATE AIM OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS DIALOGUE WOULD BE TO EXPOSE THE DIVISIONS WITHIN ZANU-PF AND TO ENSURE MUGABE'S DEMISE.

COMMENT

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INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00
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	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/006W				

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17. TSVANGIRAI APPEARED CONFIDENT AND RELAXED DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT. HIS PERSONAL ADVISER GANDI MUDZINGWA WAS ALSO PRESENT AND LATER TOLD LINDSAY THAT THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY FROM THE WHITE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, WHO THOUGHT THEY COULD BROKER A DEAL BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. THE MDC HAD TO SEE WHAT THEY COULD OFFER, AND EXPLORE ALL AVENUES.

18. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT. IF THE OVERTURES FROM ZANU-PF ARE GENUINE IT REVEALS A REAL CONCERN ABOUT THEIR RE-ELECTION CHANCES. BUT WE THINK IT MORE LIKELY THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO MANUFACTURE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MDC. WE BELIEVE THAT TSVANGIRAI UNDERESTIMATES THE DANGER THIS COULD POSE TO THE

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UNITY OF HIS PARTY, AND WE EMPHASISED TO HIM THE IMPORTANCE OF WIDE INTERNAL CONSULTATION BEFORE EMBARKING UPON ANY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUS

SIONS.

HE DID CONCEDE THAT IT WAS NOT IN THE MDC'S
ELECTORAL INTEREST TO WORK TO IMPROVE THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY,
BUT REPEATED THAT IT WAS A NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. TSVANGIRAI
IS EITHER VERY NAIVE; DEEPLY IN THRALL TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY
WHO ONLY SEE CHAOS AND BANKRUPTCY IF THE PRESENT IMPASSES
CONTINUES; OR PLAYING A MORE SUBTLE GAME TRYING TO FIND DIVISIONS
WITHIN ZANU-PF. WE THINK HE IS TRYING TO PURSUE BOTH OF THE
LATTER TWO OPTIONS.

ORIGINATOR: RICHARD LINDSAY, SECOND SECRETARY POLITICAL

LONGWORTH

END TEXT.

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13. (C) COMMENT: WE AGREE WITH THE BRITISH ASSESSMENT ABOUT
TSVANGIRAI'S POLITICAL NAIVETE AND ZANU-PF'S PROBABLE INTENTION

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OF SPLITTING THE MDC. ON THE OTHER HAND, SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT
EMMERSON MNANGAGWA, WHO INITIATED THE CONTACTS WITH THE MDC,
IS A SHREWD POLITICAL PLAYER. HE MAY BE EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES
TO THE CURRENT COURSE ON WHICH THE RULING PARTY IS TAKING THE
COUNTRY, WEIGHING THE OPTIONS FOR THE GOOD OF ZANU-PF AND, NOT
THE LEAST, HIMSELF AS PRESIDENT MUGABE'S HEIR APPARENT.

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